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T. S. DENISON & COMPANY, Publishers, 154 W. Randolph St., Chicago

HIDDEN HARMONIES

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

BY

EVELYN SIMMS

AUTHOR OF

"The Conspirators," "Divided Attentions," "Her Ladyship's Niece,"
"Maidens All Forlorn," "A Packet for Popsy,"
"Playing Gooseberry," Etc.



CHICAGO
T. S. DENISON & COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

HIDDEN HARMONIES

CHARACTERS.

MR. HANDEL WEST.....*A Musical Crank*
EDWARD THORNTON*In Love with Mabel*
MABEL WEST*The Daughter*
MRS. BARRINGTON.....*An Old Friend of Mr. West's*
LISETTE*A French Maid*

NOTE.—Mr. West must play the violin and Mrs. Barrington must play the piano. If desired, other musical items may be substituted for those mentioned in the play.

TIME—*The Present.*

PLACE—*Music Room in Mr. West's Home.*

TIME OF PLAYING—*About Thirty-five Minutes.*

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COSTUMES AND CHARACTERISTICS.

MR. WEST—An elderly little man with a somewhat irascible temper, very brusque in manner, and passionately devoted to music. He wears a velvet coat with a wide tie. Has rather long hair.

EDWARD THORNTON—A modern athletic young man, very much in love. About twenty-six.

MABEL WEST—A modern athletic girl, who hates music. She is strong-minded and has a decided way of talking. She appears first in a short tweed coat and skirt and a motor cap. Later she wears a pretty afternoon dress of some soft color, but made rather severely. She is about twenty-two.

MRS. BARRINGTON—A charming young widow of thirty-two or thirty-three. Rather languidly graceful—a contrast to Mabel—and very musical. She wears an elegant afternoon gown of palest gray, with dainty suggestions of mauve—in the latest fashion.

LISETTE—A piquant, rather pert French maid.

PROPERTIES.

Telephone; electric door bell; a number of books; pictures and busts of composers; sheets of music on piano and on music rack; a violin stand; a large screen; books and magazines on table; a pianola and record of Liszt's "La Campanella" or some other classic composition. Violin and music scores for Mr. West. Telegram and salver for Lisette.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R. means right of stage; *C.*, center; *R. C.*, right center; *L.*, left; *R. D.*, right door; *L. D.*, left door, etc. The actor is supposed to be facing the audience.

HIDDEN HARMONIES

SCENE: *The music room of Mr. WEST's country house. At the back is a French window, showing the garden beyond. On each side of the window are shelves containing books and music. There is a door, R., toward the back. Nearer the front, on the same side, is a small table with a telephone on it. Opposite the table, L., is another door; beyond is a grand piano, standing slightly away from the wall, opened, the keyboard in full view of the audience. Between the door, L., and the piano is a music rack. A violin stand is placed near the piano. A larger table stands near the center of the room, with several books and magazines lying on it. A footstool lies near the table. There are several easy chairs in the room. The pictures are all of musicians or musical subjects, and the busts of several musicians stand on the top of the book shelves. There is an electric bell in the wall, R.*

As the curtain rises the last notes of a violin solo are heard. MR. WEST lays his violin on the table and stands looking at it. MRS. BARRINGTON enters from the left, hesitates a moment and then comes forward.

MRS. BARRINGTON. Is Mr. Thornton really coming this afternoon?

MR. WEST. I've heard nothing to the contrary, Mrs. Barrington. (*Smiles at her.*)

MRS. B. I was just wondering who was to go and meet him. Mabel has been lunching at the Golf Club and she hasn't returned yet.

MR. W. (*annoyed*). Mabel is always at the Golf Club! (*He turns away impatiently. She waits for him to speak again. He does not.*)

MRS. B. Well? About Mr. Thornton?

MR. W. Mr. Thornton has forgotten to send me the time of his train. He will have to get a cab at the station. Very stupid of him!

MRS. B. (*smiling*). You must remember that Mr. Thornton is in love. (MR. WEST *shrugs his shoulders impatiently and strolls to the window.*) Does he know of the musical examination he is about to undergo? (*Lightly.*)

MR. W. You talk as if it were an operation!

MRS. B. It may prove worse than an operation—if you kill his happiness.

MR. W. His happiness lies entirely in his own hands.

MRS. B. It lies in digital dexterity on the keyboard. (*Looks at the piano.*)

MR. W. (*brusquely*). Well, that lies in his own hands, doesn't it? It certainly lies in no one else's.

MRS. B. But does he know?

MR. W. No, he does not! I merely said I wanted to have a talk with him, which was only natural, considering that he had just written to ask the hand of my daughter in marriage.

MRS. B. Does Mabel know why he is coming?

MR. W. No! And she shan't know, either, unless he comes up to my requirements. (*Walks abruptly back to the table.*) Mrs. Barrington, I have *made up my mind*! Unless Mabel marries a man who is thoroughly musical, she shall never marry at all! I must—I *will* have someone near me who can play my accompaniments.

MRS. B. (*archly*). Am I not always more than willing to play them for you?

MR. W. (*in an appreciative tone*). Ah, Mrs. Barrington, you are kindness itself, and your accompanying is perfect. I shall never forget the happy hours I have spent with you, my dear fellow-musician. But I cannot be dependent on Mabel's guests—not even upon such a friend as you. I must have someone constantly with me. I am handicapped at every turn by the need of such a one. I used to imagine that Mabel would be my accompanist. I was foolish enough to believe that when she had left school she would devote herself seriously to her musical studies. You see what has happened. The girl hates music like poison, hates the very thing which is my dearest aim and object in life—won't

touch the piano—won't even listen when I wish to play to her. (*Getting more and more worked up.*) Mrs. Barrington, I tell you I won't stand it! If Mabel will not play, her husband shall! On no other condition shall she ever obtain my consent. And on no other condition shall I ever allow Edward Thornton to ask her to marry him.

MRS. B. Are you *quite* determined?

MR. W. I am!

MRS. B. Yet, even if he could not play, Mr. Thornton is so very—eligible.

MR. W. Eligible or not—that makes no difference. Good looks, good family, good fortune, are worth nothing to me apart from good playing. No, Mrs. Barrington, if he cannot play, nothing whatever shall alter my determination. One musician at least in the family I must and will have! My decision is absolute!

MRS. B. (*softly*). Ah!

MR. W. You must know, Mrs. Barrington, that I have always prided myself on my iron will.

MRS. B. I know what that means. My poor dear Thomas was also afflicted—I mean he also had an iron will.

MR. W. My dear friend, everything can be forgiven your departed husband when one recollects his love of music.

MRS. B. Ah, yes! The memory of his passion so affected me that for three months I was unable to touch the piano, and the first time I played I composed a charming little rhapsody in his memory—entirely on the black keys. (*Sighs.*)

MR. W. He was a man to be envied, Mrs. Barrington, possessed as he was of your affections. Ah, if only Mabel had *your* talent! (*Looks affectionately at her.*)

MRS. B. If only Mabel had my appreciation of your playing! To think that she can fling aside such golden opportunities as things of no value, while I—ah! (*Turns aside.*)

Enter LISETTE, R.

LISETTE (*presenting telegram on a salver to Mr. West.*)
Zis 'ave just come, Monsieur.

MR. W. Thank you. (*Takes it.*) Will you excuse me?

(To MRS. BARRINGTON. *She nods, he opens it.*) Ah! From young Thornton! Forgot to post his letter, foolish boy. Arriving by the 2:45. (*Looks at his watch.*) Then he will be here in a few minutes. Too late to meet him now. I wonder if Mabel has come back yet.

MRS. B. I'll go and see. (*Exit R. MR. WEST sits down and picks up a magazine. LISETTE crosses the room to door L. In passing the piano she drags her fingers over the keys.*)

MR. W. (*jumping up and dropping the magazine on to the table.*) Lisette, can you play? (*In delighted surprise.*)

LISETTE. I learn ven I was young, Monsieur. My aunt, what was a dressmaker, *she* taught me.

MR. W. A case of genius in humble life! Is it to be my good fortune to discover it? (*LISETTE looks surprised.*) My good girl, how is it that you have never told me that you play?

LISETTE. I didn't zink you care, Monsieur.

MR. W. Not care! Why, music is the greatest blessing ever bestowed upon mankind. (*Walking excitedly up and down.*) It is a divine art, woman, a divine art! Is this a case of genius crushed for want of encouragement? Play, girl, play, and let me see what magic is in your touch! Is there indeed a musician in the house after all, and I unconscious of it? Play! Play!

LISETTE. I not play so vair' well, Monsieur.

MR. W. Never mind, never mind. Play!

(*LISETTE seats herself at the piano and plays a popular air, with the same chord repeated throughout in the bass. She stumbles several times.*)

MR. W. (*putting both hands to his ears*). Oh, stop, stop! No, this is not genius. But still, with diligent practice, you may overcome your defects and accomplish something yet. Listen to this! (*Takes up violin and plays a few measures of Dvorak's "Humoreske."*)

LISETTE (*rising and clasping her hands*). Ah, Monsieur, but how zat musique is exquisite!

MR. W. (*delighted*). You like it?

LISETTE. If I could play like zat!

MR. W. You *are* musical! You have the soul of a musician! You shall have some lessons.

LISETTE. Ah, Monsieur, quel bonheur! (*Clasps hands again.*)

MR. W. But you will have to begin all over again, Lisette. I am afraid you cannot have had very efficient teaching.

LISETTE (*slightly offended*). My aunt, what was a dress-maker, *she* taught me.

MR. W. But perhaps she did not play very well?

LISETTE. Mais oui, Monsieur. (*Clasps hands.*) But what musique zat was!

MR. W. Perhaps *hers* was a case of genius in humble life. (*Excitedly.*) What did she play, my girl? Mozart? Haydn? Schumann? Beethoven? Handel? Lisette, did she play Wagner, or Brahms?

LISETTE. I know not zose mens. But my aunt, what was a dressmaker, she play most lofly!

MR. W. Then what did she play? Perhaps it was Chopin or Liszt?

LISETTE (*shrugging shoulders*). Maybe so.

MR. W. Do you remember the names of the pieces she played?

LISETTE. Oui, Monsieur. Maybe zose mens wrote zem. I like best zat one she play—ah, what is ze name? You know it, Monsieur? (*Sits down at the piano and stumbles over a few notes.*) Ah! It ees call “Ze Lobstair’ Parade” She play zat most lofly!

MR. W. (*sinking into a chair*). Is *that* all?

LISETTE. But no, Monsieur. She play all kind lofly musique. She play also rag time musique. Maybe zose mens—how you say? Chopin? Liszt? Maybe zey wrote zem. “Hot Time,” and “All Coons Look Alike to Me.” You know zose piece, monsieur?

MR. W. Oh, why must all my fondest hopes, my dearest aspirations, be thus nipped in the bud? It is cruel! Cruel! Cruel! (*Drops his head in his hands.*)

Enter MABEL from the garden, in golfing costume.

MABEL (*sharply, to LISETTE*). What are you doing at the piano?

LISETTE (*rising*). I was making ze musique, mademoiselle.

MR. W. (*taking a book from the table*). I was preparing to give Lisette a music lesson, my dear?

MABEL. What nonsense! (*To LISETTE*.) Return to your work at once. (*Exit LISETTE, L.*) I never heard of anything so ridiculous! (*MR. WEST goes on reading.*) Father!

MR. W. (*without looking up*). Why should I not teach her? She is most anxious to learn, which is more than I can say of her mistress.

MABEL. You needn't be always reminding me of that.

MR. W. (*rising suddenly*). How can I help reminding you of it? You know it has been the dream of my life that you should play—

MABEL (*interrupting, lightly*). Like this? (*She goes to the piano and thumps a few chords. He turns angrily away.*) Ah! You see, when I do play, your dream becomes a nightmare.

MR. W. Ha! Mabel, you would shatter the patience of Job. You have thwarted my most cherished plans—ruined my lifelong hopes—and now, now—you joke about it!

MABEL (*rising from the piano stool*). Well, you know I never did like music. (*He touches the violin.*) No, father, don't. You'll send me out of the room if you do! (*Impatiently.*) Why should I pretend an interest in a thing which means nothing to me? I hate music! I'm tired to death of it! I hear nothing but music morning, noon and night! If you had your own way with me, I honestly believe that my very reading would be limited to dictionaries of music and the lives of musicians. (*Waves her hand toward the bookshelves.*)

MR. W. Instead of which you are now wasting your whole time at the Tennis Club or up on the Golf Course! (*They look challengingly at each other, then he comes nearer to her, speaking very deliberately.*) Mabel, does Mr. Edward Thornton play?

MABEL (*brightening*). Rather! He is magnificent! He won the Challenge Cup at the—

MR. W. (*angrily*). Pshaw!

MABEL (*offended*). Well, you asked me if he played.

MR. W. Do you think the whole world is a golf course? I asked you if Mr. Edward Thornton played the piano?

MABEL. You never mentioned the piano!

MR. W. (*losing all patience*). Does he, or does he not?

MABEL. I really haven't the slightest idea. (*Airily.*) By the way, what time is he supposed to arrive this afternoon?

MR. W. (*still furious*). He ought to be here now. Mabel, I have made up my mind!

MABEL. So have I!

MR. W. That you shall never have my consent to your marriage with *any* man unless he can play the piano!

MABEL. Then I shall have to remain in single blessedness all my life. For *I* have made up my mind that I will never marry at all unless it be to a man who hates music as much as *I* do. (*Bangs on the piano.*)

MR. W. Grrurrh! You—you—it is too much! It is unbearable!

MABEL (*sweetly and a little surprised*). But what has all this to do with Mr. Edward Thornton's visit? (*He glares at her without speaking.*) If he is really expected in a few minutes, don't you think I had better go and change my dress?

MR. W. Oh, you—you—(*exit angrily R., banging the door*).

MABEL. And music is supposed to have a soothing effect upon the nerves! (*Laughs and goes out L.*)

Enter MRS. BARRINGTON *and* EDWARD *from the garden.*

EDWARD. I am so glad to find you staying here. It was very good of you to come down the drive to meet me.

MRS. B. I wanted to speak to you before you saw Mr. West. (*Very seriously, as they walk down the room.*) Edward, can you play the piano?

EDWARD (*laughing*). Good heavens! You'd better not hear me try!

MRS. B. Then you may as well go straight back to the city.

EDWARD (*suddenly grave*). You don't mean that?

MRS. B. I do. Mr. West is quite determined that he will never allow his daughter to marry any man who cannot play.

EDWARD. In the name of all that's unreasonable—why?

MRS. B. Because Mabel *will not* play.

EDWARD. But how absurd! Mr. West must be a perfect crank! Is the happiness of my whole life to be ruined because I can't play the piano? (*Looks incredulously at Mrs. BARRINGTON.*) Does *she* agree?

MRS. B. I suppose she will have to. Can you play *nothing*?

EDWARD. Nothing! I once tried to learn "The Merry Peasant" when I was ten. It was then that they gave up teaching me in despair. I have never played a note since. (*Brightens suddenly.*) But I could learn, have lessons, anything he likes. That would do, wouldn't it? I can't give in, I can't! Mr. West doesn't know how much I love Mabel. Don't you think I could have some lessons?

MRS. B. Do you realize how long it would take for a man who has never played to learn the piano? And Mr. West's accompaniments are not easy.

EDWARD. But is there *nothing* I can do?

MRS. B. I must think. Don't let him know at once that you can't play. (*Laughing.*) You see you *have* played—a little. Make the most of that. Something may turn up before a disclosure is necessary. (*Smiles.*) And don't *look* despondent, whatever you feel! (*The knob of door R. is turned from the outside.*) There he comes! Smile!

Enter Mr. WEST, R.

MR. W. So here you are, Mr. Thornton. Very glad to see you again. (*They shake hands.*)

EDWARD (*with a rather forlorn smile*). I am delighted to be here, Mr. West. It was awfully stupid of me to forget that letter.

MR. W. Tut! Tut! Never mind the letter! I am only sorry that Mabel and I were not ready in time. Has Mrs.

Barrington been good enough to make up for our deficiencies? (*Smiles at MRS. BARRINGTON, who smiles back and sits down.*)

EDWARD. Mrs. Barrington has made me more than glad to see her here.

MR. W. That's right. Sit down, my dear fellow, sit down. (*EDWARD sits down.*) This is my music room. I hope we shall spend some very happy hours here during your little visit. You play, of course? (*Sits down.*)

EDWARD. I—I am afraid I only play a *very* little.

MR. W. You are modest, Mr. Thornton. I daresay you are quite a finished performer.

EDWARD. Indeed, sir, I—er—I assure you that I am by no means—finished.

MR. W. Ah! I shall have to judge of that bye and bye. What are your favorite masters, I wonder? (*EDWARD hesitates.*)

MRS. B. Mr. Thornton tells me that he plays Schumann.

MR. W. (*delighted*). Schumann? Ah, then, my dear young friend, you must indeed play well. And Chopin? Beethoven? Liszt? You are of course familiar with all their noble works. The Ballades of Chopin? The Rhapsodies of Liszt? You know them?

EDWARD (*taking courage*). I have devoted a good deal of time lately to rhapsodies. I seemed to be in the mood for them.

MR. W. (*excitedly*). You delight me beyond measure. I adore Liszt. As a pianoforte composer he is magnificent. Do you play his Paganini Caprices? "La Campanella?" Don't say that you do not!

EDWARD (*recklessly*). I have no intention of doing so, Mr. West. As a matter of fact, "La Campanella" is one of my favorite pieces.

MR. W. Play it! Play it! (*Rises and goes quickly to the piano, opening the top.*)

EDWARD. Oh! (*Rises and looks at MRS. BARRINGTON.*)

MRS. B. Don't you think it would be fairer to Mr. Thornton to wait until he has rested a little? It is so difficult to do

oneself justice where one is tired. (EDWARD *looks at her gratefully.*)

MR. W. (*leaving the piano*). Ah, I had forgotten your recent journey, Mr. Thornton. Still, as it was not a very long one, I hope we shall not have to postpone the pleasure of hearing you for long. I must tell you frankly that I have resolved to accept only a musical man as my son-in-law. (*Approaches EDWARD.*) If you had not been able to play, you would never have had my consent to your marriage with Mabel. For, when once my mind is made up, I *never* alter. As it is, however, you may speak to my daughter as soon as I have heard you play.

EDWARD (*nervously*). I cannot express my feelings.

MR. W. Never mind that. I shall be sufficiently repaid by having such a performer and accompanist as you in the family. Are you interested in old scores? I have a number of very valuable ones upstairs. If you would like to see them?

EDWARD. I should be delighted.

MR. W. I will fetch them down. My dear boy, you renew my interest in life. (*Exit R.* MRS. BARRINGTON and EDWARD *look at each other with a "now-we're-in-for-it" expression.*)

Enter MABEL, L., in an afternoon dress.

MABEL. So you managed to find your way, Mr. Thornton!

EDWARD (*turning quickly to her*). Miss West! How are you? (*They shake hands.*)

MABEL. I'm so sorry I wasn't ready when you came. I've been playing golf all the morning.

EDWARD. It was my fault for arriving so early. I found when I left the office that I could just manage the next train so I sent a wire from the station and caught the train as it was about to start.

MABEL. Then you haven't had any lunch?

EDWARD. There wasn't time.

MRS. B. And you actually preferred missing your lunch to waiting for a later train?

EDWARD. Wasn't that natural? (*Looks at MABEL, who smiles.*)

MABEL. You must be awfully hungry.

EDWARD. You are responsible for that, as you are also responsible for the fact that I forgot to post my letter telling your father when I was coming. You are responsible for a good many things, Miss West.

MABEL. I am very sorry. (*Laughs.*) But if I go now and interview cook on your behalf, will you forgive me?

EDWARD (*laughing also*). Have you any doubt of that?

MRS. B. He had better see what cook sends him before he promises forgiveness. Put on your most coaxing smile, Mabel. (*MABEL goes out gaily, L.*)

EDWARD (*turning abruptly*). Mrs. Barrington, help me, I implore you!

MRS. B. Indeed, I am most anxious to. But I don't see what we are going to do. You can't postpone your playing forever. He will not be satisfied with merely talking about it. (*Rests elbow on the arm of her chair, chin in hand, gazing at the floor. EDWARD stands gloomily watching her.*)

EDWARD. You don't think persuasion would be of any use?

MRS. B. Not a bit. We have gone too far now. Besides, when Mr. West has once made up his mind, persuasion has no more effect on him than—than cotton wool has on adamant.

EDWARD. I'm more in love with her than ever.

MRS. B. Oh, think, think! Set your wits to work. Your life is at stake. At least your life with Mabel is at stake, and there is no time to lose!

(*EDWARD sits down, frowning, his face set. Both think hard for a few seconds.*)

MRS. B. (*suddenly.*) I have it! (*Both rise.*)

EDWARD. You angel! Tell me!

MRS. B. It's a dreadful risk, but we've simply got to let the future take care of itself. The present is the only thing that matters now. Look here—(*breaks off as footsteps are*

heard approaching door *L.* Both look at the door. As it opens, she whispers something to him.)

EDWARD (*astonished and delighted*). Oh!

Enter MABEL, L.

MABEL. Your lunch is in the dining-room. (*Archly.*) It's a very nice one.

EDWARD. Are you going to make it nicer still by talking to me while I have it?

MABEL (*smiling*). Of course! (EDWARD *looks questioningly at MRS. BARRINGTON, who nods, as if to say, "I will manage everything," then he goes out L. with MABEL.*)

MRS. B. (*alone*). Not a minute to lose! (*Flies to each door, making sure it is shut, then sits down by the telephone and takes up the receiver.*) Hello! I want 40097, please, as quickly as possible. . . . Yes. . . . Hello! Is that 40097? . . . I'm Mrs. Barrington, staying at The Towers. . . . You remember my name. . . . Yes, I have been in several times for music. . . . Yes. . . . Yes. . . . Can you send a pianola up here *at once*? It is *most* urgent. . . . Oh! . . . What? . . . You can? . . . Good! . . . Ten minutes? . . . Yes, that will do beautifully. Send some rolls, of course. "La Campanella," by Liszt, and anything else you like. . . . Thank you. . . . Yes. . . . "La Campanella" . . . Yes. (*Rings off and rises.*) If only Edward can manage the thing. (*Frowns, standing in the middle of the room, thinking.*)

Enter MR. WEST, R.; with some scores.

MR. W. Where is Edward? I want to show him these scores.

MRS. B. He is having some lunch in the dining-room. Mabel is with him.

MR. W. I hope he will feel up to playing for me afterwards. I am most anxious to hear him. (*Delightedly.*) He must be an unusually gifted young man.

MRS. B. Very unusual in more ways than one. Do you know what I have just discovered?

MR. W. No. What?

MRS. B. That he is so frightfully nervous when he is playing that he cannot bear anyone to watch him. If we might listen in the next room, or if a screen could be arranged—

MR. W. (*with gay good humor*). Easily! Poor fellow! I thought he seemed a little nervous when he was talking to me. And doubtless he is made more so by knowing how much depends on his playing. Certainly he shall have a screen. (*Rings bell R.*)

MRS. B. (*on an impulse and rather anxiously*). If he had not been able to play, would you *really* have stuck to your resolution?

MR. W. *Most decidedly* I should!

MRS. B. Even if I had pleaded *very* hard? (*Smiles.*) We are such old friends—could you have found it in your heart to refuse me?

MR. W. (*taking her hand*). It would have been hard to refuse, my dear friend. But—(*he shakes his head without finishing and releases her hand as door R. opens.*)

Enter LISETTE, R.

MR. W. I want that large screen brought in from the hall, please.

LISETTE. Oui, Monsieur. (*Exit R.*)

MR. W. Well, I'll just go and show Edward these scores before he prepares to play. (*Exit L., chuckling, the scores under his arm.*)

MRS. B. If only he will continue to show them until the pianola comes! (*Moves violin stand away from piano.*)

LISETTE enters R. with a large screen.

MRS. B. Let me help you. (*She goes to meet LISETTE, taking hold of the screen.*)

LISETTE. Zank you, Madame. (*They arrange the screen so as to hide completely anyone sitting at the piano from people entering on the right, though the keyboard is left in full view of the audience.*)

MRS. B. Yes, I think that is right. (*Alters a fold, look-*

ing critically at it from the right.) Lisette, can you keep a secret?

LISETTE. Mais oui, Madame. (*Smiles.*)

MRS. B. (*looks carefully round the room, then approaches* LISETTE). We are going to play a little joke on Mr. West—

LISETTE (*amused*). Oh, Madame!

MRS. B. He wants to hear Mr. Thornton play. Mr. Thornton cannot play, so I have ordered a pianola, and he is going to play *that*.

LISETTE. Oh, Madame! (*Laughs.*)

MRS. B. The pianola will be here soon—in a motor van. Let the men bring it in here *at once*, and be sure that the dining-room door is shut. Mr. West and Miss Mabel are both there, and neither of them must know anything about it. You understand?

LISETTE. Oui, Madame. But zis is better zan ze musique lesson, yes!

MRS. B. *Music-lesson?*

LISETTE. Oui, Madame. I pairmit Monsieur West to give me ze musique lesson. Monsieur is a leetle—what you call—(*touches forehead*) so—on ze musique. It ees pairhaps well to please 'im, 'e ees vair riche, is Monsieur, and—

MRS. B. (*severely*). That will do, Lisette.

LISETTE. Oui, Madame.

MRS. B. (*starting suddenly and listening*). Lisette, that is the van! Go, go! (*Pushes her towards door L.*) And oh! Tell the man to be just as quiet as *possible*!

LISETTE. Oh, oui, oui, madame.

MRS. B. And Lisette! (*LISETTE turns.*) When Mr. West and the others leave the dining-room, see that they come in here by the other door. You can manage it!

LISETTE. Oui, Madame. (*Exit L.*)

MRS. B. Ah! (*Clasps hands for a moment, listening, then moves to each door in turn and listens, pulls the music-stool away from the piano and listens again.*)

Enter LISETTE, L., carrying a box and followed by two men with the pianola. MRS. BARRINGTON flies to door R., where she stands keeping guard.

MRS. B. Be as quick as you can, please.

(The men adjust the pianola, LISETTE hovering about them, bubbling over with enjoyment. One of them replaces music-stool in front of pianola. They go out L.)

MRS. B. The music rolls! *(She comes to the piano.)*

LISETTE. Ici, Madame. *(She places box on music-stool.)*

MRS. B. *(opening and searching in it)*. Go show those men out. They must not be seen. *(Exit LISETTE, L. MRS. BARRINGTON takes a roll from the box and fixes it in the piano. She places the box on the floor by the screen.)* This is positively the most awful risk I ever ran! *(She comes into the center of the room as door R. opens.)*

Enter MR. WEST, MABEL and EDWARD.

MR. W. *(joyfully, putting down his scores on the table)*. He is going to play to us at last. *(To EDWARD.)* And you mustn't be nervous, my dear boy. There is the screen. We shan't watch you. *(EDWARD glances at MRS. BARRINGTON, who smiles.)* Now, what is it to be? "La Campanella," your favorite?

EDWARD. If you wish it. *(Looks at MRS. BARRINGTON.)*

MRS. B. Yes, do play that. I want to hear it so much. *(Sits down.)*

MABEL *(as EDWARD goes to the other side of the screen)*. I had no idea you could play the piano! *(She also sits down, looking vexed.)*

EDWARD *(cheerfully, from behind the screen)*. Don't expect too much yet, Miss West. *(Begins to work pianola.)* Even my best may fall very short of your expectations. *("La Campanella" begins. MABEL looks perfectly disgusted; MRS. BARRINGTON laughs to herself; MR. WEST in an ecstasy of delight, beats time with a baton.)*

MR. W. *(after an interval of playing)*. But that is magnificent! Enchanting! Wonderful! *(Walks about, beating time.)* My dear fellow, what did you mean by denying that you played well? You are a musical genius!

MABEL *(in a tone of dismay)*. Oh!

MR. W. *(after another short interval of playing)*. My

dear boy, I am perfectly delighted! (*Excitedly.*) What a touch! What delicacy! What perfect time! Paderewski isn't in it!

MRS. B. Edward, you are surpassing yourself. (*Goes on laughing quietly. MABEL clenches her hands tightly. Her face expresses anger, dismay, obstinacy. There is an interval of playing.*)

MR. W. Keep it up! Keep it up! It is beyond my highest expectations! Your touch is superb! Your perception! Your interpretation—is masterly! You're the son-in-law for me! You're the man after my own heart! (*EDWARD finishes playing.*) The wedding shall take place as soon as you like. I never heard such playing.

MABEL. Oh! (*Jumps up and runs out R. MR. WEST does not notice. He goes to meet EDWARD, who appears from behind the screen.*)

MR. W. Your success is absolute! (*Slaps him on the shoulder.*)

EDWARD. Then you give me your consent to marry your daughter?

MR. W. With all my heart, sir; with all my heart. Mabel—why, where has the girl gone? Go and find her my boy, and good luck go with you!

EDWARD. Thank you, thank you! (*Hurries out R. MR. WEST turns to MRS. BARRINGTON.*)

MR. W. (*rubbing his hands*). Isn't he marvelous! Did you ever hear anything like it? To think of my dreams being realized like this!

MRS. B. It is almost—too good to be true!

MR. W. Ha, ha! I must go and give them my blessing! (*Exit R., chuckling.*)

MRS. B. (*alone*). In spite of his resolve, can he refuse to let them marry now? Oh, no, no! (*Comes round the screen to the piano.*) This must be moved. (*Hesitates. Exit L.*)

Enter MABEL and EDWARD from garden.

MABEL (*turning upon him as he follows her in*). Why are you following me like this? I went into the garden to

be alone. (*Comes down to center table, where she stands with her back to him.*)

EDWARD (*cheerfully*). But I want to talk to you. (*Coming round table close to her.*) Do you know why I came here today? Mabel, I love you. And I came to ask you to be my wife. Dearest, will you?

MABEL (*drawing herself up coldly*). The last half-hour has made that impossible. I have resolved never to marry a musical man.

EDWARD (*anxiously*). You don't meant that?

MABEL. I always mean what I say. (*Passionately.*) I hate the very word music, and I know that life with a man who plays as you do would be intolerable.

EDWARD. Yet my playing was the only condition on which I was able to obtain your father's consent. Do you refuse to marry me because of that? Mabel!

MABEL (*haughtily*). I prefer you to address me as Miss West, if you please. No, Mr. Thornton, I can never be your wife. And—and that's all. (*Exit hurriedly through the French window.* EDWARD looks after her.)

EDWARD. What on earth am I to do? (*Stands looking despairingly at the floor, his hands in his pockets, then suddenly gives a violent kick to the footstool by the table.*)

Enter MRS. BARRINGTON, followed by LISETTE, L.

MRS. B. (*surprised*). Edward! I thought you were with Mabel.

EDWARD. Mabel has refused me.

MRS. B. What? (*Comes to him.*)

EDWARD. She said I played too well!

MRS. B. But if that is all—

EDWARD. It's everything! I'm between two stools and there is no way out.

MRS. B. This is a decidedly unforeseen complication. (*Looks at him, frowning.*) Surely she couldn't have meant that. You have to learn that a woman in love very often says things she doesn't mean.

EDWARD (*despondently*). She meant this!

LISETTE (*standing by the pianola*). Monsieur will return before zis is away, yes!

MRS. B. Oh, I had forgotten. Edward, help us to take out the pianola. We must decide what to do before Mr. West finds this out.

EDWARD (*detaching the pianola*). It won't make much difference whether he finds out or not.

MRS. B. (*pushing back the screen*). Don't say that yet.

Enter R., MABEL, pushed in by MR. WEST, who follows. She looks amazed.

MR. W. Mr. Thornton, Mabel has just told me that she has refused you. I am furious with her. Her only reason is that you play so—(*sees what they are doing and breaks off suddenly*. MRS. BARRINGTON and EDWARD both look very guilty and sheepish. MR. WEST releases MABEL'S arm and strides angrily forward. MABEL'S face brightens suddenly. She watches them with eagerness. MR. W., in thundering tones.) What is the meaning of this? (MRS. BARRINGTON speaks to LISETTE, who looks amused and goes out.)

EDWARD. I—Mr. West—it was impossible—it was the only way—

MRS. B. Can't you understand the temptation and forgive the deception? (*Pleadingly*.) To lose all hope of marrying Mabel simply because he could not play—

MR. W. (*trembling with rage*). It was outrageous! No, I will not forgive it! (*Fiercely*.) You told me yourself that he played Schumann!

EDWARD. I once did learn "The Merry Peasant." (MABEL laughs suddenly.)

MR. W. (*turning angrily*). What are you laughing at? Let me tell you that this is no laughing matter. I am only thankful that you had the sense to refuse him! (MABEL and EDWARD suddenly catch each other's eyes and smile. MR. WEST turns back to EDWARD.) Leave my house at once, sir!

MABEL (*coming forward*). Oh, father!

MR. W. Not a word! Not a word! He must go! That's an end of it! (*To EDWARD*.) There is a train back at 5:15.

You understand me, sir? 5:15! Mabel, order the motor to be here in twenty minutes.

MRS. B. Would it not be wiser to discuss this quietly tomorrow instead of sending Mr. Thornton away?

EDWARD. Mr. West, I will do anything—

MR. W. Then you will do as I tell you, sir, and return by the 5:15. Mabel, go and order the motor.

MRS. B. And then take Mr. Thornton round the garden while you wait for it. Even under these circumstances your father could not wish you to neglect his guest. (MABEL brightens again. She and EDWARD look gratefully at MRS. BARRINGTON. MR. WEST rages silently as MABEL goes to the French window.)

EDWARD. Thank you, Mrs. Barrington. I shall see you again. (She gives him her hand. They smile. He turns to MR. WEST, who is still fuming.) Must I really say good-bye, Mr. West?

MR. W. I don't wish you to say anything more to me!

EDWARD. But may I go with your daughter? .

MR. W. (furiously). You can go to Jericho!

MABEL (from the window). Come along! (He follows her with alacrity. Exit both.)

MR. W. Mrs. Barrington. I—I—I—it is unpardonable! (Storms up and down.)

MRS. B. (pleadingly). Ah, don't be too hard on them. Can you deliberately wreck the happiness of two young lives like this? It was I who made the suggestion. I don't wish to conceal it. I plead guilty. I only ask you to remember the cause which prompted the deception. Poor Edward is desperately in love.

MR. W. (stopping abruptly). You don't think he is going to propose to her again?

MRS. B. It is the only thing he is at all likely to do—the only thing he *can* do now. Mabel has shown that she cares for him.

MR. W. (with angry obstinacy). I won't have it! I will not! I must stick to my resolution! I must have one musical member in the family. I *will* have someone to play my

accompaniments. Mabel refuses point blank. She always has refused. But if she can be obstinate, so can I. I must, I *will* have someone to play for me. (*Bangs on the table.*)

MRS. B. (*archly leaning forward a little and looking at him*). Must it be a son-in-law?

MR. W. (*his anger suddenly changing to delight*). Is it possible, my dear Adelaide, that you return my affection? (*He takes her hand. She turns her back on him, still allowing him to retain her hand.*)

MRS. B. (*coquettishly*). Oh, Handel, how can you?

MR. W. How sweet that name sounds upon your lips. Adelaide, do you mean it? (*He draws her gently round, facing him.*)

MRS. B. You know what pleasure it gives me to accompany you.

MR. W. And you are willing to accompany me always—throughout my life?

MRS. B. If you will let me, dear. I will try to keep in time—and in tune. (*He kisses both her hands.*)

MR. W. You are adorable.

MRS. B. But Mabel? And Edward?

MR. W. (*gazing at her*). Since I have obtained my heart's desire, can I stand in the way of their gaining theirs? A musical son-in-law is no longer necessary to me, now that I have won you, most musical of women! (*He takes up his violin.*) Shall we? (*She smiles in agreement.*)

MRS. B. (*moving to the piano and opening some music*). How delightful it is to know that there is such perfect harmony between us.

MR. W. We will hide it no longer. (*They play Dvorak's "Humoreske."* The curtain descends as they play the last measure.)

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Deacon Dubbs

By WALTER BEN HARE

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SYNOPSIS

Act I.—Rose Cottage on an afternoon in June. Yennie Yensen, the Swedish hired girl, wants to borrow some yumps and decides to bid on the hired man at the auction, as "he bane a purty gude looking feller." Miss Philipena arranges for the auction sale. Rose and Amos. "Out of the broken ruins of time fair blossoms grow, God's last amen is a white rose." The Deacon arrives from Sorghum Center, State o' West Virginny. "Ding, dong, bell, pussy's in the well." The farm is sold to Rose Raleigh for two thousand dollars. The defeat of Rawdon Crawley.

Act II.—Same scene, a morning in August. Wedding bells. "Happy is the bride that the sun shines on." Deuteronomy and Yennie bring wedding presents. Miss Philipena takes a nap with disastrous results. Yennie is scared. "Your face, it bane put on backwards." Back from the grave. "You are my wife. Take off that bridal wreath, that sparkling necklace." "Who is this man?" The Deacon arrests Rawdon Crawley.

Act III.—Same scene but a year later and in autumn. The husking bee. Songs and merriment by the villagers. "Rawdon Crawley has escaped!" "This is my punishment and my punishment is more than I can bear." The Deacon returns from New York. Miss Philipena and the fractious cow. The Deacon's nightmare. "Cork, cork, cork!" A wheelbarrow for two. The Virginia reel. The death of Rawdon Crawley. "We'll have a double wedding and for a honeymoon we'll all go down to Sorghum Center, State o' West Virginny."

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Pickles for Two, 15 min. 2		
Pooh Bah of Peacetown, 35 min. 2 2		
Prof. Black's Funnygraph, 15 m. 6		
Sham Doctor, 10 min. 4 2		
Si and I, 15 min. 1		
Special Sale, 15 min. 2		
Stage Struck Ducky, 10 min. . 2 1		
Sunny Son of Italy, 15 min. . 1		
Time Table, 20 min. 1 1		
Tramp and the Actress, 20 min. 1 1		
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